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SUBJ: UPDATE OF PMAC REORGANIZATION RUMORS

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 12249, B. ADDIS ABABA 12105

SUMMARY: RUMORS OF PROVISIONAL MILITARY ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL (PMAC) REORGANIZATION HAVE COALESCED OVER PAST SEVERAL DAYS INTO RELATIVELY CONSISTENT STORY. REORGANIZATION APPEARS COMPLETE, WITH FORMAL NOTIFICATION REPORTEDLY SENT TO CIVILIAN MINISTRIES. RELIABLE SOURCES NOW SEEM TO AGREE SECOND VICE-CHAIRMAN, LTCOL ATNAFU ABATE HAS EMERGED WITH DEFENSE AND PUBLIC SECURITY PORTFOLIOS. FIRST VICE-CHAIRMAN LTCOL MENGISTU HAILE-MARIAM WILL ALLEGEDLY BECOME CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. SIZE OF SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL (SMC) LIKELY TO BE 17, OR 18 IF BGEN TEFERI BANTE INCLUDED, WITH PMAC MEMBER LT ALEMAYEHU HAILE SECRETARY GENERAL OF SMC. RELIABLE SOURCE REPORTS REMAINDER OF PMAC MEMBERS NOT INCLUDED ON SMC WILL BECOME ADVISORS TO PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATORS AND CIVILIAN MINISTRIES OR RETURN TO UNITS. SMC WILL NOT INCLUDE CIVILIANS. FUTURE OF POLITICAL OFFICE FOR MASS ORGANIZATIONAL AFFAIRS (POMOA) UNCERTAIN, BUT EXPECTED TO CHANGE DURING NEXT 2-3 MONTHS. FORMATION OF RELATIVELY NEW CIVILIAN QUASI-PARTY POLITICAL GROUP REVOLUTIONARY FLAME, WHICH MAY ALSO INCLUDE SOME MILITARY AND PO-
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LICE CURRENTLY OPPOSED TO LTCOL MENGISTU AND HIS HAILE-FIDALED SUPPORTERS, APPARENTLY RECEIVING BACKING OF LT ALEMAYEHU. RUMORS OF MEMENTARY PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF PMAC REORGANIZATION HAVE PERSISTED FOR TWO WEEKS WITHOUT FRUITION. END SUMMARY.

1. SEVERAL RELIABLE SOURCES HAVE REPORTED PAST FEW DAYS REOR-

GANIZATION OF PMAC COMPLETE. THESE SOURCES STATE BG TEFERI BANTE LIKELY TO REMAIN AS TITULAR HEAD OF STATE WITH PMAC SECOND VICE-CHAIRMAN, LTCOL ATNAFU ABATE HOLDING DEFENSE AND PUBLIC SECURITY PORTFOLIOS AND PMAC FIRST VICE-CHAIRMAN, LTCOL MENGISTU HAILE-MARIAM ALLEGEDLY BECOMING CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. ONE SOURCE REPORTED LTCOL MENGISTU NOW RESIDES AT FIRST DIVISION HEADQUARTERS WHERE HE UNDER "CLOSE" SURVEILLANCE, HAVING BEEN MOVED FROM MENELIK HILL. SOURCE ADDED MENGISTU GRADUALLY BEING CUT-OFF FROM SOURCES OF PREVIOUS CONTROL. AS EXAMPLE SOURCE CLAIMED PUBLIC SECURITY ADVISORS NO LONGER PERMITTED TO REPORT MENGISTU AND NOW REPORTED TO LT ALEMAYEHU HAILE. POWERFUL, FORMER MENGISTU SUPPORT LT COL DANIEL ASFAW WHO IN CHARGE OF PMAC MILITARY OPERATIONS HAS ALLEGEDLY TURNED AGAINST MENGISTU. VALIDITY OF REPORT OF MENGISTU DECLINE NOT POSSIBLE TO DETERMINE YET, BUT THIS IS VERSION OF REORGANIZATION NORTHERNERS WISH TO BELIEVE MOST. ON OTHER HAND, SOUTHERNERS BELIEVE LOSS OF POWER UNTRUE, AND SEE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS POST AS ENHANCING MENGISTU'S POWER AS UNDECLARED PRIME MINISTER.

2. VARIOUS SOURCES REPORT SIZE OF SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL (SMC) LIKELY TO BE 17. LT ALEMAYEHU HAILE, PMAC POLICE REP WHO MAY HAVE BEEN PROMOTED TO CAPTAIN, WILL ALLEGEDLY BE SECRETARY GENERAL OF SMC. OTHER MEMBERS OF SMC AND THEIR REPORTED RESPONSIBILITIES ARE AS FOLLOWS: LTCOL ASRAT DESTA, CHAIRMAN, INFORMATION AND PRESS; MAJ BERHANU BAYEH, RETURNED TO CHAIRMAN, LEGAL AFFAIRS; CAPT MOGES WOLDE-MIKAEL, CHAIRMAN, FOREIGN AFFAIRS; SR. AIR FORCE TECHNICIAN, GESSESSA WOLDE-KIDANE, CHAIRMAN, ECONOMIC AFFAIRS; CONFIDENTIAL

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LTCOL HIRUYE HAILE-SELASSIE, CHAIRMAN, SECURITY AFFAIRS; LTCOL TEKA TULA, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, SECURITY AFFAIRS; LTCOL TSEFAYE GEBRE-KIDAN, CHAIRMAN, DEFENSE AFFAIRS; MAJ FISSEHA DESTA, POSSIBLY CHAIRMAN, ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS; OTHER SMC MEMBERS UNKNOWN TO SOURCE AT PRESENT. SOURCE ADDED PMAC MEMBER, POLICE MAJOR DEMESSIE DERESSA REPORTEDLY WILL BECOME MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HOUSING, WHICH ADMINISTERS KEBELES. (MAJ. DEMESSI, ALLEGED TO SUPPORT MENGISTU, REPLACES ANOTHER LESS POPULAR MENGISTU SUPPORTER, ATO DANIEL TADESSE). SOURCE BELIEVED 3 PMAC MEMBERS WILL BE ASSIGNED AS ADVISORS TO EACH PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND ONE TO EACH CIVILIAN MINISTRY. REMAINDER WOULD RETURN TO THEIR UNITS. OTHER REPORTS HAVE SMC PRESIDING OVER LARGER GOVERNING BODY CONSISTING OF 40 ADDITIONAL FORMER PMAC MEMBERS, WHO WOULD MEET IN PLENUM ABOUT ONCE EVERY THREE MONTHS.

3. BECAUSE OF UNCERTAINTY OF MENGISTU'S STRENGTH WITHIN CONSOLIDATED PMAC, FUTURE OF POMOA CONCOMITANTLY

UNCERTAIN. AS MENGISTU'S ADVISORY BODY, POMOA LIKELY TO RISE AND FALL WITH HIS FORTUNES. MOST RECURRENT RUMOR IS POMOA WILL BE TRANSFORMED DURING NEXT 2-3 MONTHS AND POSSIBLY REPLACED BY NEW CIVILIAN ADVISORY GROUP. UNPOPULARITY OF POMOA, ALLEGED TO BE WIDESPREAD AMONG CURRENT PMAC MEMBERS, WOULD SUPPORT SPECULATION OF POMOA TRANSFORMATION.

4. FORMATION OF REVOLUTIONARY FLAME (ABIOTAWI SIDET) GROUP WITHIN PAST 6 WEEKS MAY PROVIDE SOURCE OF NEW CIVILIAN ADVISORS TO SMC/PMAC. GROUP ALLEGEDLY COMPOSED OF SELF-PROCLAIMED RADICAL ADVISORS OF LT ALEMAYEHU. REVOLUTIONARY FLAME BELIEVED TO INCLUDE SOME POLITBURO CADRES AND MEMBERS OF MILITARY AND POLICE DISCONTENTED WITH MENGISTU'S SEEMINGLY ARBITRARY DECISIONS WHICH LACKED PMAC APPROVAL. ITS VIEWS DO NOT SEEM TO DIFFER GREATLY FROM CURRENT AESO OR EPRP IDEOLOGY, THOUGH GROUP OPPOSES BOTH. (REVOLUTIONARY FLAME HAS ALLEGEDLY PUBLISHED 3 PAMPHLETS WHICH EMBASSY UNABLE TO OBTAIN SO FAR. WILL POUCH TO DEPT IF WE DO.)
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5. COMMENT: WHILE PERSONALITIES INVOLVED IN REORGANIZATION APPEAR RELATIVELY FIRM NOW, FUTURE POWER RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN PMAC ARE NOT NEARLY SO CLEAR. EMBASSY WILL WANT TO STUDY NEW ALIGNMENT STRUCTURE AND GAIN BETTER READING OF IMPLICATIONS FOR MENGISTU AND ATNAFU BEFORE PASSING JUDGMENT ABOUT FUTURE DIRECTION OF EPMG, INCLUDING IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY.
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